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CONTACT: Michael Bustamante 916/445-4571

Governor Davis Announces Decision Regarding MTBE Determines Risks Outweigh Benefits of Fuel Additive

SACRAMENTO – In a move to protect the people of California from possible health risks Governor Gray Davis today announced that he will direct a three year, eight month phase out of the fuel additive Methyl Tertiary Butyl Ether (MTBE). Through his executive order, Governor Davis today began the state-wide process, across an array of agencies, to remove MTBE from California's gasoline supply. Additionally the governor has called upon California's federal delegation to establish a forum for the removal of MTBE without violating the Federal Clean Air Act. The Governor made the following comments at a press conference today.

"I hereby certify that there is, on balance, a significant risk to California's environment associated with the continued use of MTBE in gasoline. I am directing the appropriate state regulatory agencies to devise and carry out a plan to begin immediate phase out of MTBE from California gasoline, with 100% removal achieved no later than December 31, 2002.

"I will be asking the US Environmental Protection Agency for an immediate waiver from the oxygen mandate in the Clean Air Act, with the understanding that California will still fully meet the air quality emission standards of the Act.

"California will not backslide on air quality. Nor will we sacrifice clean air for clean water. We can and we will have both clean air and clean water.

"I believe that an aggressive but responsible phase out period is the most prudent course of action for California."